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REPORT ON HOLMES HOUSE (HOLMES PLYMOUTH ACADEMY BOARDING HOUSE) AND HOLMES BARN FORMERLY 5 SUMMER STREET PLYMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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MAY 16, 2010

This report is based on a brief inspection of the Holmes house and barn on the morning of May 14, 2010. The purpose of the report is to give Plymouth State University, the owner of the property, a summary of the date, characteristics, and significance of the barn, with some added contextual discussion of the attached house. Present from the Department of Cultural Resources were Elizabeth Muzzey, Shelley Angers, Laura Black, and James Garvin. Present from Plymouth State University were Stacey Yap, who arranged the inspection, Sylvia Bryant, Diane Tiffany, Wayne Vlk, Heidi Pettigrew, and Katherine Donahue. Ms. Tiffany had previously prepared a summary chronology of Holmes House, which forms the core of the chronology that is attached to this report as an appendix.

Summary: The Holmes Barn was built circa 1850, after the property had ceased to be connected with Holmes Plymouth Academy (defunct after 1844) and had become a private residence. It seems likely that the barn was constructed by local attorney William Leverett (1813-1874), who reportedly purchased this property around 1847 and who married in 1851. The building is an excellent early example of so-called “balloon” framing, which utilizes sawn framing members that are nailed together. Such framing became commonplace in New England during the 1850s and 1860s, and predominant thereafter. The barn served to stable horses and undoubtedly to shelter carriages on the first story, and to store hay on the second. As shown by historical maps, the barn originally stood somewhat west of its present location, being located at the corner of Court and Summer Streets (neither of which remains visible as a street at this intersection). The barn was moved a short distance easterly to its present site sometime between 1885 and 1892 when the property was occupied by Francis Asbury Cushman (1816-1900), who had married Catherine Russell Leverett, the widow of William Leverett, in 1886. This move placed the barn on a brick foundation, a type of foundation that was much more common in the late 1800s than

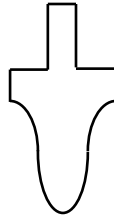
in the mid-1800s. The barn retains almost complete physical integrity and is an excellent example of a small barn adapted to the needs of a village house. Construction of the barn was accompanied by certain stylistic changes in the dwelling, described at the end of this report. Construction of the barn and stylistic changes to the house may have been motivated by Leverett's marriage in 1851. Together, the house and barn represent a vestige of the residential neighborhood that has since evolved into the heart of the campus of Plymouth State University.



Description: The barn is a framed structure measuring 24'-4" by 34'-5" long. It stands on a brick foundation built on fieldstone underpinning and laid in common bond. The barn is clapboarded. Its original wood-shingled roof is covered by asphalt shingles on the north and by metal sheets in the south slope. The roof displays a pronounced overhang on both its horizontal and its raking eaves, thereby exhibiting a roof style that was common in the 1850s and 1860s and was shared by houses, railroad depots, and many other structures of that period. The barn faces westerly toward the former Summer Street, and is entered through a pair of inward-swinging hinged doors that are offset somewhat to the south of the central axis of the façade. This placement of the doors provides an interior driveway that served several horse stalls that were formerly located along the northern wall of the structure. A hay door is positioned above the center of the entrance doors at the floor level of the second story or hayloft of the barn.

The barn exhibits simple exterior detailing except on the façade. Window openings are framed with square-edge casings, capped with horizontal quarter-round caps. Several window casings retain pintles for blinds, an unusual feature on a barn. The windows are filled with six-over-six

sashes that have a muntin profile that is characteristic of the period from about 1845 to about 1890, and thus cannot be dated with great precision:



As noted above, the northern portion of the first floor of the barn formerly provided several horse stalls. As was typical, each stall had a small north-facing window. These windows have been removed and their openings sheathed and clapboarded, making the former presence of the stalls invisible from the exterior. Some of the existing partitions on the north side of the barn probably incorporate elements from the stall walls.

The raking eaves of the façade of the barn are marked by ornamental detailing that reflects the style of the mid-1800s. From the bottom to a point near the apex, these strongly projecting eaves are ornamented with heavy and widely spaced modillions. At the apex, the eaves are provided with an ornamental feature consisting of a horizontal beam and a central post. Together with the raking cornice, these members form two triangular openings at the peak of the roof. These openings are ornamented with fret-sawn trefoils, while the soffit of the beam is fitted with sawn drops. Both the heavy modillions and the apex ornament were inspired by the pervasive influence of Andrew Jackson Downing's book, *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850), a volume that illustrated similar features as appropriate for the front gables that Downing favored both for houses and barns. These features of the façade of the barn would have distinguished the structure as a progressive and modern structure to passers-by in the mid 1800s.

The frame of the barn is likewise of a type that would have been regarded as modern in the mid 1800s. It is a balloon frame, composed of sawn members of uniform sizes, nailed together rather than connected by the mortise and tenon joints that characterized older building frames. The balloon frame was not invented in the eastern states, which had a long tradition of heavy framing. According to widely-accepted tradition, the balloon frame was developed out of necessity in Chicago, by George Washington Snow (1797-1874), who had moved west from Keene, New Hampshire. Snow supposedly used this makeshift method of framing a waterfront warehouse in 1832 when he presumably could not obtain enough heavy timbers for a normal frame. Some researchers say that the first appearance of the frame was in a small Catholic church building erected in Chicago in 1833 by Augustine D. Taylor, a local carpenter. In either case, the method was quickly adopted in the timber-poor prairie states, and is credited with meeting the almost insatiable housing needs caused by the great westward expansion of the mid-nineteenth century.

If Snow was, in fact, the first to use the balloon frame, it may be that he was inspired to attempt this light framing method by some of the developments he had observed near Keene. Southwestern New Hampshire appears to have seen the use of all-sawn house frames, with common rafter roofs, by 1830 or earlier. The same region has many plank houses, some of them

walled entirely with sawn planks, without posts or studs, and thereby suggesting the feasibility of eliminating the traditional heavy frame.

Despite such regional experimentation, however, New England was slow to give up the principle of the braced frame. As late as 1843, New England author Asher Benjamin published a book illustrating a light form of the braced frame that used two-inch-thick sawn joists but still relied on heavier posts and mortise-and-tenon joints. Other books began to illustrate the balloon frame by 1860.

Adoption of the balloon frame depended upon two factors: inexpensive nails and inexpensive framing members. Inexpensive nails began to appear just before 1800, when machines were introduced to supplant the ancient method of forging nails by hand. Inexpensive sawn lumber for wall posts and studs, on the other hand, did not appear until later. The economical production of small-dimension lumber depended largely upon the speed of the saw. As long as slow reciprocating saws remained in use, the production of a multitude of two-by-four-inch studs, for example, remained a time-consuming (and hence an expensive) process.

Faster sawing of lumber resulted from two developments. The first was the widespread adoption during the early nineteenth century of the water-powered turbine in place of the vertical water wheel. With its high speed of rotation, the turbine proved to be the ideal power source for woodworking machinery of all kinds. In areas that lacked water power, steam engines were often used to power sawmills after the mid 1800s.

The second revolutionary development was the introduction of the circular saw. Unlike the upright or reciprocating saw, which cuts only on the downward stroke of a flat toothed blade, the circular saw cuts continuously. Depending on the diameter and speed of the blade and the rapidity with which the carriage is advanced against the saw's teeth, the circular saw can cut a board in seconds. An upright saw, cutting about a quarter-inch on each stroke, might require ten or twelve minutes to cut a board from a sixteen-foot log.

The circular saw is a toothed iron or steel disk, mounted in a vertical plane and rotating at high speed. Such saws had been the subject of experimentation and patent in eighteenth-century England, and were known in the United States by the early years of the nineteenth century. In their earliest commercial uses in New England, during the 1820s and 1830s, such saws seem to have been restricted to such uses as the cutting of shingles, clapboards, and small-dimension millwork rather than being employed in the large-scale production of lumber. As late as the 1870s and even into the twentieth century, many of the smaller and older sawmills in the lumber country of northern New England were still using upright saws.

At the same period, however, many advances in the design and metallurgy of circular saw blades, and the introduction of steam to power very large sawmills, made cheap, circular-sawn planks and timbers easily available in all areas and encouraged the adoption of the balloon frame.

Examination of the frame of the Holmes barn showed that virtually all its framing members (posts, studs, joists, and rafters) were sawn on a circular saw. The builder of the barn therefore took advantage of a new technology that provided economy in the use of a multitude of smaller framing elements, rather than fewer large, heavy members. Because the hayloft floor joists and

the rafters are 24 feet and more in length, the mill that produced them had an unusually long log carriage that permitted the sawing of planks far longer than the common maximum length of 16 feet. Plymouth had supported sawmills of various sizes since the eighteenth century and was regarded as an important sawmilling center, so the circular saw may have made a relatively early appearance here. Further research in local histories, United States Industrial Census returns, and similar sources may reveal when the first circular saw was introduced in or near Plymouth.

Where examined, the sheathing boards that cover the circular sawn frame reveal evidence of having been sawn both in a circular sawmill and in the older type of reciprocating or “upright” sawmill. Mills of both types were undoubtedly operating simultaneously in the Plymouth area in the mid 1800s. The builder of the barn evidently obtained lumber for sheathing from more than one mill or lumber dealer. The barn sheathing also includes a limited number of second-hand, whitewashed boards, visible in the hayloft area.

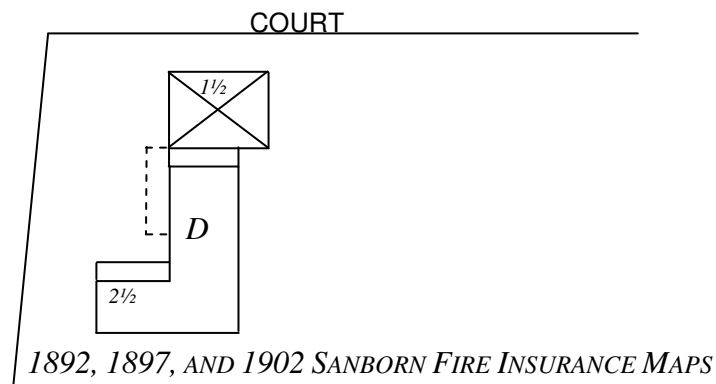
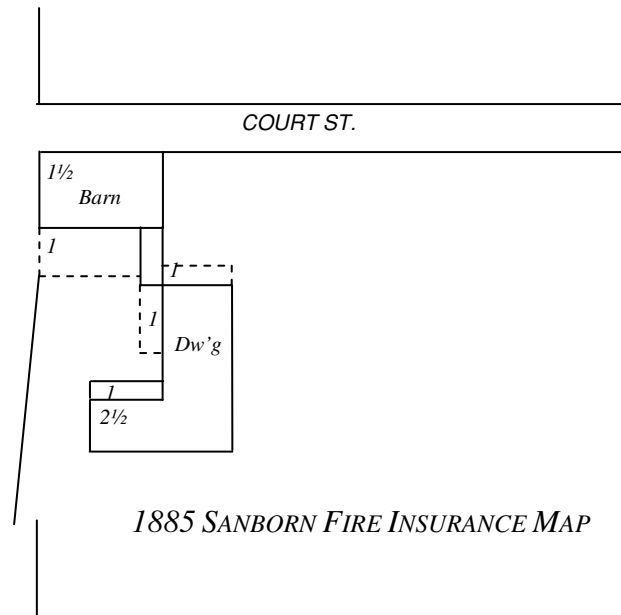
Using these components, the builder of the barn constructed a staunch structure that retains structural integrity. As is characteristic of early balloon frames, the barn retains some principles from earlier frames that were built of heavy timber. At the level of the hayloft floor, the side walls of the barn are provided with heavy timbers or girts in place of the light, sawn “ribbands” that mark the balloon frame in its later development. These heavy timbers are connected to the posts at each corner of the barn, and the building is stiffened against racking by diagonal braces that extend from the undersides of the girts down to the faces of the corner posts in the manner of the older “braced” frame.

Where measured, the studs, joists, and rafters are placed about 25 inches on centers. The floor joists of the loft run without a joint the 24-foot width of the building, their ends being supported on the sawn girts described above. Without support from below, the excessive width of the hayloft joists would have caused sagging or failure under the weight of stored hay, so the loft joists are supported at their midpoints by a heavy, sawn girder that runs longitudinally down the center of the building, supported at intervals by posts. In keeping with the characteristic structural regularity of the balloon frame, the spacing of the wall studs is echoed in the spacing of the hayloft floor joists and the rafters that rest on the wall plates directly above each stud.

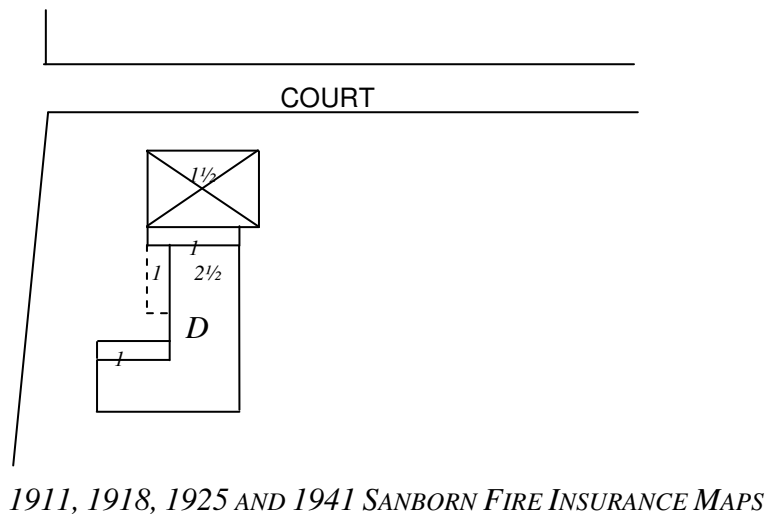
As noted in the general description of the barn, the rafters display a pronounced overhang beyond the wall plates, echoing the style of deeply projecting eaves that was common in the mid 1800s. The rafters are fixed to the wall plates with sawn “bird’s mouth” joints. The feet of alternate pairs of rafters are connected by long, sawn tie beams that run across the hayloft above the wall plates, securing the plates against spreading from the outward pressure of the rafter feet. Halfway up the roof, all rafter pairs are connected by nailed horizontal collar ties that prevent sagging of the rafters under snow and wind loading. Long boards are nailed at irregular intervals and angles to the undersides of some of the rafters, perhaps having been attached during the raising of the roof but left in place to serve as wind braces, further stiffening the roof membrane.

Known history of the barn: Two sources, a lithographed bird’s-eye view of 1883 (not available in digital format, but reprinted by the Plymouth Historical Society) and a Sanborn fire insurance map of 1885, reveal that the barn originally stood farther to the north and west than it does today. It was placed at the corner of Summer and Court Streets, evidently close to the public rights-of-way. The same sources show that the detached barn was connected to the ell of the house by a

one-story shed. The barn had been moved to its present position, close to the end of the ell of the dwelling, by the time the succeeding Sanborn insurance map had been drawn in 1892:



The alignment of the façade of the barn was apparently drawn incorrectly in these maps. It was corrected in maps drawn from 1911 until 1941 (the last available map):



The physical integrity of the front portion of the barn as it is seen today seems to prove that the cartographer was in error in showing the barn's façade aligned with the western elevation of the wing of the house in the Sanborn maps of 1892, 1897, and 1902. There is no evidence or suggestion that the front wall of the barn has been altered since the construction of the building.

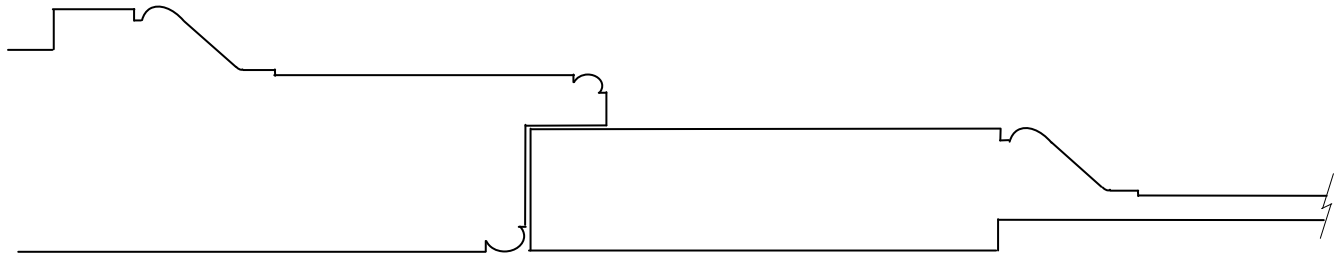
Correlation of Construction of the Barn with Changes in the Dwelling: As noted in the Appendix, Holmes House was built in 1835 as the first of two boarding houses for Holmes Plymouth Academy. The year 1830 and the years immediately succeeding 1830 saw an architectural transition in New Hampshire. The federal style that had predominated since around 1800 gave way to the incoming Greek Revival. In some buildings, the Grecian character predominated almost immediately. In others, the characteristic elements and details of the Greek Revival blended with those of the outgoing federal style. Not uncommonly, certain rooms in houses of this period will be marked by the style of one period, while other rooms will display the features of the other.

As built in 1836, Holmes House was such a dwelling. Some of its features, especially on the east side of the house, clearly reflect the incoming Greek Revival style. Yet in general, the house retains the feeling and most of the stylistic hallmarks of the federal style. It is a conservative dwelling, as might be expected of a structure that was built as a boarding house rather than as a private home.

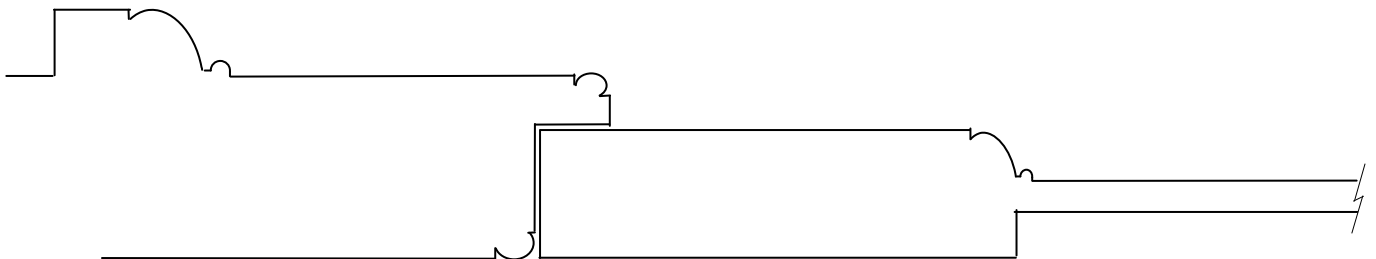


The inspection of Holmes House was brief and unsystematic, so this report will not attempt a thorough analysis of the house. The main purpose of mentioning the dwelling is to show that it underwent some remodeling at about the time the barn was built, providing evidence of a general transformation of the property, possibly made by attorney William Leverett at the time of his marriage in 1851.

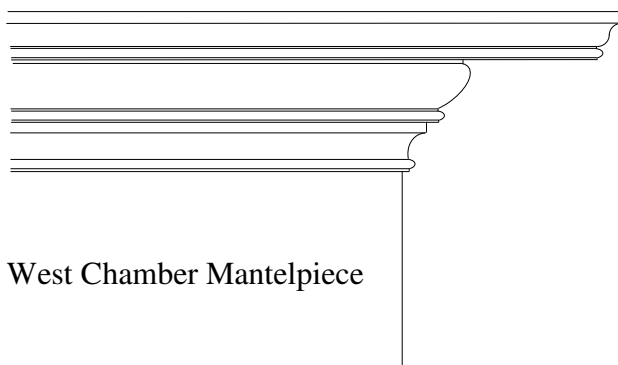
In looking past the changes of the mid 1800s, and further changes made by Plymouth State University, it becomes clear that the east side of the front portion of the house was the more stylish both on the first and second stories, thus apparently representing the parlor and the parlor chamber. On this side of the house, we find six-panel doors and door casings that include the broad, flat moldings of the early Greek Revival style.



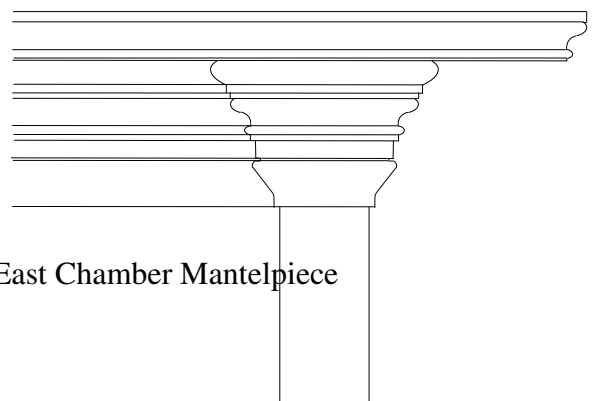
By contrast, the original six-panel doors on the western side of the house fully reflect the older federal style.



While the doors and casings on the eastern side of the house reflect the incoming Greek Revival style, the original mantelpieces were apparently more conservative, utilizing the delicate moldings that had characterized the federal style for the preceding thirty years. As noted below, the mantelpieces on the first floor have been replaced, but the two surviving mantelpieces on the second floor, while differing from one another in detailing, are equally representative of a conservative retention of the federal style.



West Chamber Mantelpiece

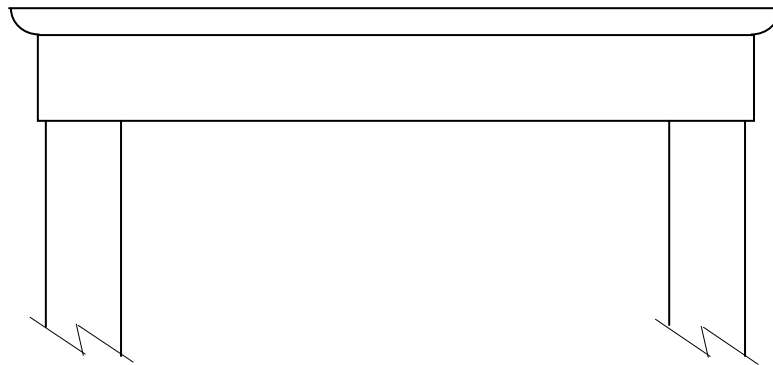


East Chamber Mantelpiece

The current mantelpieces on the first story of the house contrast sharply with the delicacy of the conservative, federal-style mantelpieces on the second story. These first-floor features are among the most prominent elements of a remodeling that took place in the house, especially on the first story, around 1850. While the doors and door casings on the east side of the house, as originally finished, reflect the first tentative introduction of the Greek Revival style, the existing first story mantelpieces represent the culmination of that style around 1850. As seen below, late Greek Revival features are heavy and robust, with little if any applied ornamentation.



Similarly, the door casings throughout much of the house were altered to reflect the latest manifestation of the Greek Revival style. In most cases, original doors were left in place, but surrounded with new enframements.



The alteration of features like mantelpieces and door casings during the mid-nineteenth century was not uncommon. Often, similar changes were carried out on the exterior of houses to denote the owner's awareness of the current architectural style, but there is no clear evidence of this on Holmes House, unless perhaps in the design of the east-facing doorway of the wing (not studied).

As it stands, Holmes House exhibits architectural character from three periods: the federal-Greek Revival transition of 1835, the period around 1850, represented by interior remodeling on the dwelling and in the construction of the barn, and the era after 1989, when Plymouth State College purchased the building from Gertrude Shaw Silver. The college adapted the structure for office use, replacing the window sashes, adding a few partitions to subdivide the interior of the main house, and substantially reconfiguring the floor plan of the two-story wing.

Stored in the hayloft of the barn are a number of original doors, including an original exterior door, that were removed from the house during the latter alteration. These doors are parts of the original fabric of the building and are important diagnostic tools for more carefully analyzing the history and original stylistic character of the house. They should be safeguarded against accidental disposal.

The Holmes House barn is an integral feature of the history of the property. The barn marks the transition from the use of the property as a boarding house to its long-term function as a private home. The barn retains integrity of structure and design. It serves a useful function, and could be adapted to serve many other functions. Together with Russell House and Ellen Reed House, Holmes House memorializes a village neighborhood that has been transformed over the decades into the heart of the campus of the normal school, college, and university. These remaining vestiges are tangible links with the old village that has largely disappeared through commercial development along Main Street and through the continued growth and expansion of the academic campus west of Main Street.

APPENDIX

HOLMES HOUSE AND BARN PLYMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE FORMERLY 5 SUMMER STREET PLYMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

KNOWN CHRONOLOGY

This chronology was built on the framework of a chronology that was compiled and kindly provided by Diane Tiffany of University Advancement.

The chronology is based on Ms. Tiffany's document and on the published sources that are cited. Due to limitations of time, no deed research was carried out to verify the chain of ownership of Holmes House. Rather, the history of ownership is based on secondary sources, notably Ezra S. Stearns, *History of Plymouth, New Hampshire* (Plymouth, N. H.: for the town, 1906). This authoritative source, by a careful author, was compiled closely enough in time to the founding, operation, and demise of Holmes Plymouth Academy to be regarded as trustworthy both with respect to the construction of Holmes House and the subsequent history of the property down to 1906.

Dates shown in **boldface** pertain directly to the house and barn; other entries are provided for context.

- 1808 Holmes Plymouth Academy was incorporated December 7, 1808 (*Laws of New Hampshire, Vol. 7, Second Constitutional Period, 1801-1811*, [1918], pp. 694-96). The academy was named for Col. Samuel Holmes, who donated 500 acres for the support of the institution (Ezra Stearns, *History of Plymouth, New Hampshire* [I:298-99]).
- 1822 "Holmes' Plymouth Academy will be opened on the 4th Monday in November next. The Trustees are erecting a neat and commodious edifice for the Academy, on a pleasant site near the Court house in Plymouth; and have engaged a Preceptor, who will faithfully devote himself to the best interests of the school. Good boarding near the Academy may be had on reasonable terms. NATH'L P. ROGERS Sec'y. Plymouth, Sept. 21, 1822" (*New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, October 14, 1822).
- 1823 Ezra Stearns in his *History of Plymouth, New Hampshire* (I:300), states that at a meeting of the academy board of trustees on September 2, 1822, a committee of trustees was appointed to hire a preceptor. "The report is lost, and the name of the teacher or teachers, if any were employed, cannot be stated." Newspaper notices list William G. Webster as preceptor (*New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, March 3, 1823, August 25, 1823). A William Webster served as trustee of the academy from 1826 to 1837 (Stearns I:300).
- 1825 Samuel A. Burns was employed as preceptor, and served for one year.

- 1827 A trustee committee was appointed to procure a suitable boarding house for the preceptor and to carry out need repairs to the academy building, including a new door, lock, and key. Col. William Webster was placed in charge of the repairs (Stearns I:301).
- 1827 Mr. Abbot was employed as preceptor. Due to insufficient revenues, he remained for only one term (Stearns I:301).
- 1828 Ira Young, a Lebanon native who later served for 25 years as a professor at Dartmouth College, served as preceptor for part of the year (Stearns I:301).
- 1828 Milo P. Jewett served as preceptor for one year beginning in September 1828.
- 1834 The Rev. George Punchard was elected a trustee. He would later serve as secretary.

c.1834 Stearns provides records showing that major building projects were undertaken in 1835 (see below): “The fortunes of Holmes Plymouth Academy were reflected in golden hues. The old academy building was removed, a new and enlarged [brick] building was erected, additional land was purchased, and two boarding-houses were built for the accommodation of the institution. In the work of rebuilding the academy buildings the citizens of Plymouth, with the approval of the trustees, assumed a leading part and in a great measure bore the burden of a substantial undertaking. They chose two committees to prosecute the work, naming one citizen and two of the trustees on each committee. In this work the trustees were enlisted and rendered efficient service as citizens, and the records of the corporation for a season are silent. In the end, as soon as the enthusiasm of the citizens had become satiated by achievement, the corporation was called upon to accept the subscriptions, which were large, and to assume the cost of the land and the new buildings, which were larger. The citizens retired. The academy never recovered from the burden of debt then assumed, and never was able to meet the financial obligations which were created under the voluntary administration of the citizens” (Stearns I:302).

Stearns quotes from the academy records regarding the erection of the boarding houses:

August 29, 1835. Voted that William W. Russell, Ezra W. Avery [Campton], and John Rogers be a committee to complete the Academy House, and that their former doings in removing the former building and erecting the one now in progress be ratified and accepted.

Voted that William W. Russell, George W. Ward and John Rogers be a committee to purchase land for a boarding house and to complete the house now being erected on the land purchased of John Bailey, and that the said purchase be ratified and accepted (underlining added).

Voted that Russell, Ward, and Rogers, committee, be authorized to draw on the treasurer for any sum not exceeding three thousand dollars (Stearns I:303).

Stearns quotes another narrative from the academy records of August 1835:

The inhabitants of the village, in the autumn of 1834, subscribed towards the enlargement of the Academy building and chose a committee to superintend the business. Two out of three of the committee were trustees. The materials were procured, and in the spring and summer of 1835 the Academy Building was rebuilt. . . . A contract was made and concluded for the purchase of three acres of land and the buildings thereon and a spacious boarding house projected and a committee appointed to purchase the materials and erect the house (Stearns I:303).

- 1835 A bill was introduced and passed June 27, 1835 to change the name of Holmes Plymouth Academy to "Plymouth Literary and Theological Seminary" (*Laws of New Hampshire, Vol. 10, Second Constitutional Period, 1829-1835*, [1922], p. 687). Stearns says that the academy trustees met twice and unanimously voted not to accept the change of name. Newspaper notices cited below indicate that the institution continued to be referred to as Holmes Plymouth Academy. Stearns notes that some catalogues erroneously display such names as "Teachers Seminary and Theological Institute," "Teachers Seminary," and "Teachers Seminary and Classical Institution" (Stearns I:304).
- 1835 George Cook served as principal for one year. The catalogue for this year lists 168 students, of which 62 were Plymouth residents (Stearns I:304).
- 1836 Theological instruction was attempted briefly and then removed from the curriculum.
- 1836 The Rev. Samuel Reed Hall was selected as principal on February 26, 1836, although Hall did not begin his duties until 1837 at a salary of \$650 (Stearns I:306). According to Carter's *Native Ministry of New Hampshire* (p. 173), Hall served as principal at the Plymouth Seminary between 1836 and 1839.
- 1837 "*Liberality*. We learn the Col. RUFUS G. LEWIS, of New Hampton, has made a donation of \$1000 for the benefit of the Female Seminary in that place, and that he has also given \$1600 to the Trustees of Holmes' Plymouth Academy." *New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, March 27, 1837.
- 1838 The academy catalogue lists 248 students (Stearns I:307).
- 1839 "TEACHERS' SEMINARY, Plymouth, N. H. The Fall Term of this Institution—in which the education of Teachers, male and female, is a primary object—will commence August 21st, and continue eleven weeks. . . . Lectures may be expected, nearly every day of this term, from the Principal, Rev. S. R. Hall, upon the history of education, the Art of Teaching, and upon other scientific and important subject. . . . Geo. Punchard, Secretary." *New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, July 15, 1839.
- 1840 Samuel Reed Hall left early in 1840 and was replaced by Joseph G. Hoyt, who remained for one year.
- 1841 George Punchard lists himself a secretary of the trustees of Holmes' Plymouth Academy in an advertisement for the academy's summer term, confirming that the institution had

continued to use its original name. J. Winter is listed as principal and Charles Short as assistant in the classical department. No further mention is made of teaching teachers. *New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, May 14, 1841.

- 1841 Stearns documents the corporate demise of Holmes Plymouth Academy. On January 30, 1841,"the treasurer was instructed in the name of the corporation to execute a note of \$3,363.92 and mortgage on all property of the corporation, except the academy building, to the Pemigewasset Bank. Also to make a note of \$6,659.42, payable, with interest, to William W. Russell, and a note of \$3,731.05, payable, with interest, to John Rogers, and to execute a second mortgage on the same real estate to Russell and Rogers" (Stearns I:311).
- 1843 The spring term of Holmes' Plymouth Academy is announced by "W. Willey," principal. *New-Hampshire Patriot and State Gazette*, March 9, 1843. The fall term is announced by "W. Willy," principal, with Miss C. B. Whipple in charge of the female department. Stearns explains the apparent continuation of Holmes' Plymouth Academy after its actual dissolution and the sale of its property: "From 1842 to 1865 there were frequent terms of school in the academy building. The principals, following a usage of the time, were pleased to name the school "The Plymouth Academy," "The Plymouth Seminary," or "Plymouth High School." The school was in the same building, but these irregular terms were not a continuation of the Holmes Plymouth Academy. They were private schools, dependent upon the tuition of pupils, and the teachers were accountable to no one. . . . An attempt to secure the names of all these nomadic instructors has not been made. Worcester Willey conducted a commendable school in the academy buildings from 1842 to 1845. . . . Mr. Willey was succeeded by Samuel B. G. Corser, a native of Boscawen, and a graduate of Dartmouth, 1841" (Stearns I:313).
- 1844 According to Stearns, "at a meeting assembled at the inn of Denison R. Burnham, May 9, 1844, the trustees confirmed the sale of a tract of land and one of the boarding houses thereon to Dr. Norman C. Stevens. The proceeds of the conveyance, \$1100, was paid on the note held by the bank" (Stearns I:312). Dr. Stevens was a physician in Plymouth from 1842 to 1847, after which he moved to Boston (Stearns I:471-72). Stearns continues that "the larger boarding-house, standing on the site of the normal-school building [in 1906; i.e., Rounds Hall], was two stories high, and a spacious and substantial structure, affording accommodation for sixty or more inmates. The smaller boarding-house, now [in 1906] the residence of Mrs. Cushman, was sold, as stated, in 1844, to Dr. Stevens" (Stearns I:313).

Stearns continues, "At this meeting [of May 9, 1844] Mr. Russell and Mr. Rogers were instructed to sell all the personal property of the Holmes Plymouth Academy and made another payment on the note held by the bank. . . . In the record of a meeting in May 1844 appear the manifestations of immediate dissolution. On a motion of William C. Thompson, seconded by Rufus G. Lewis, it was voted unanimously that all of the property be sold or leased for the purpose of paying the debts of the corporation, that all subscriptions and notes due the corporation be collected, and that after paying the balance of the note held by the bank, the remainder be paid to William W. Russell and John Rogers in the proportion of their claims. The entire claim of the bank was satisfied and

the claim of John Rogers was compromised. By levy and foreclosure the land and the academy building and the remaining boarding-house became the property of William W. Russell. The corporation was dissolved. Mr. Russell sold the entire property to James H. Shepard, July 10, 1852. The succeeding owner was the Suffolk Loan and Accumulating Association, which secured title by foreclosure and which sold the property Feb. 5, 1861, to Denison R. Burnham. Mr. Burnham sold the [second] boarding-house to John T. Cutter. At the founding of the State Normal School [in 1870], Mr. Burnham and Mr. Cutter conveyed the land and buildings to the State (Stearns I:312).

- 1847?** The first boarding-house became the home of William Leverett (1813-1874), an attorney who came to Plymouth in 1838 or 1840 and practiced law there for 35 years. In 1851, Leverett married Catherine Russell Spaulding. Leverett was also a justice of the peace and served as superintendent of schools. He died in 1874 (Stearns I:452; II:407). His daughter Caroline Ruth Leverett (b. 1853) served as town librarian. The Leverett House is located adjacent to the former Grafton County Courthouse, which was moved to Court Street, remodeled, and long served as the town library under the care of the Young Ladies' Library Association.
- 1850** Stearns reports that "in 1850 James H. Shepard rented the academy buildings and removed to Plymouth. Two years later he purchased all the lands and buildings of the Holmes Plymouth Academy. He taught nearly four years and made a gallant effort to found a permanent institution" (Stearns I:313-14). Stearns lists still later principals or teachers, including Joseph Clark, Edward Winslow Howe (1859), George Merrill (one term), Andrew Jackson Huntoon (c. 1861), Charles Melroy Fellows (1862), Eli Mellen Wight and Henry D. Wyatt (both 1863, 1864, and spring 1865).
- 1860** The Grafton County map shows W. Leverett Esq. living at this location, and the Plymouth business directory on this map lists the law firm of Leverett & Blair. Henry W. Blair read law with William Leverett and later became Leverett's law partner (Stearns I:452).
- 1885** The Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the house with one-story extension off the back wall and a porch on the west side of the ell. The barn was farther away from the house, set farther to the west at the corner of Summer and Court Streets, and linked to the ell by a shed.
- 1886** Catherine Russell (Spaulding) Leverett, widow of William Leverett, married Francis Asbury Cushman (1816-1900), a manufacturer of woodworking machinery and mowing machines in Lebanon, later involved in the wood pulp industry. Cushman moved to Plymouth upon his marriage and remained in this house until his death. (Stearns II: 183-84, 407). His widow was living there in 1906 when Stearns mentioned described Holmes House as "the smaller boarding-house, now the residence of Mrs. Cushman" (Stearns I:313).
- 1892** The Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the barn moved closer to the end of the ell and apparently connected to the ell by a narrow one-story link. The façade of the barn is

indicated as even with the face of the ell; this appears to be an error, and the 1911 map shows the current relationship, with the façade of the barn projecting forward.

- 1892** The Hurd atlas shows “C. A. Leverett” living at this location. At that date, the property was actually owned by Catherine R[ussell] Leverett , presumably but not necessarily in common with her second husband, Francis Asbury Cushman. Also living there would have been Carolyn Ruth Leavitt, Catherine’s daughter and the librarian of the adjacent Young Ladies’ Library Association.
- 1912?** The Plymouth State University timeline states that the house “became the home of Gertrude Shaw, who was secretary to the president of Plymouth Normal School 1912-1954.”
- 1946** Dr. Ernest Silver and his sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Spurr, moved into the house with Miss Shaw in 1946 upon Dr. Silver’s retirement. When Mrs. Spurr died, Silver and Miss Shaw married and made some improvements to the house. Dr. Silver died in 1949 at age 72. According to Wayne Vlk, the one-story link that connected the ell of the house and the barn had been raised to its current two stories before Plymouth State College acquired the property. The two-story link now provides a secondary staircase leading to exit doors on the first story.
- 1989** The University System of New Hampshire bought the property from 101-year-old Gertrude Shaw Silver.
- 2007** The barn caught fire on October 20, 2007, from an apparent lightning strike. The fire was quickly extinguished. “Damage was limited to a barn wall and interior stairway and was estimated at \$10,000.” *Plymouth Magazine*, Winter 2007.
- 2008** The house was renovated with interior painting and carpeting and tile floors laid in a foyer and the kitchen.